

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

February 25, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR AL HAIG

FROM: Phil Odeen *PO*

Enclosed FYI is a review of a recent book on Vietnam that was carried in the Post on Monday. The book, "The Village," is by F. J. "Bing" West. Bing was in the Marines for three or four years, worked at Rand for several years, and now is on the OSD (Systems Analysis) staff.

Bing worked for me for a year or so and is an exceedingly bright and capable fellow. You may recall the "West Report" of a year ago on Cambodia. He and two colonels from the Joint Staff and ISA traveled to Cambodia to study the FANK. Their report, which was forwarded to the NSC, was one of the few careful and objective looks at the FANK, warts and all.

I heard today that Bing has been suggested as the replacement for Fred Ladd. I don't know how far it has gone, but I would be hard pressed to think of a more capable man for the task. He is young (early 30's), but has years of experience in SEA and is an energetic doer. If you want to pursue this, John Chaisson or Jim Schlesinger could give you a good assessment of his abilities.

Hadn't heard this at all
PO

WASHINGTON POST 21 February 1972 PIE(23)

Books

Brave Men at War

THE VILLAGE. By F. J. West Jr.

(Harper & Row, 288 pp., illustrated, \$7.95)

Reviewed by
Peter A. Jay

The reviewer returned in January from 18 months as The Washington Post's bureau chief in Vietnam.

By the light of subsequent events, the decision to send U.S. Marines into South Vietnam in 1965 was little short of disastrous.

Not only did it open the tap through which American troops were poured until there were over 540,000 of them on the ground, but it bogged the Marines down in a kind of fighting for which the Corps was never intended—a grinding, interminable war of attrition that cost over 100,000 Marine casualties.

Years from now, the Marines who fought in Vietnam will probably be best remembered by the American public not for objectives stormed and taken but for the pounding they endured along the DMZ at places like Khe Sanh, Con Thien, Firebase Fuller and the Rockpile.

There was another side to the Marine Corps' war, far removed from the combat bases and the aircraft air-supported operations that were what most correspondents saw.

Beginning in 1966, and continuing through 1970, until just before the Marines left Vietnam for good, squads of Marine volunteers lived for months on end in a few hamlets with Vietnamese local militiamen, the "Combined Action Groups." The joint units were first called CAGs (Combined Action Groups) and then CUAP (Combined Unit Pacification Program) teams.

It was a strange sort of life, living around in the sun much of the day flirting with village girls and eating fish and rice traded for C-rations. There were no inspections and no officers—and every night was spent on the move, in the rice paddies and blacked-out hamlets, stalking the local guerrillas and being stalked by them.

"What I like about it is that we're independent and don't have all that chicken-shit they have up at regiment," a 19-year-old corporal named Joe Batista told me when I stayed with his squad in a hamlet in Quang

Nam province in 1970. But he was a tough disciplinarian—the squad kept its weapons clean, set its ambushes carefully, and stayed alive.

There are military men who feel that this is the way Vietnam should have been fought—by tough volunteers who lived alongside the Vietnamese with whom they served, fighting the same rifleman's war as their enemy.

But few people thought so then, in those days of exuberant faith in raw force, and perhaps even fewer care now. The CAPs and CUAPs are history, like agroville and strategic hamlets and the Phoenix program, but it is history of which the Marines can be proud.

F. J. West Jr., a former Marine officer who studied the CAP program for four years for the Rand Corporation, has written brilliantly of this side of the war—one village and the militiamen and Marines who fought and died together there in one 17-month period in 1966 and 1967.

Binh Nghia, in the sandy coast of Quang Ngai province south of Chu Lai, had been Vietcong country for six years when twelve Marines and a platoon of Popular Forces set up camp there on a hill outside the village.

It remained Vietcong country, more or less, during the months the combined unit remained there—but at great cost to the enemy in men, time and popular support.

But "The Village" is not a book about tactics but about people and soldiers, Vietnamese and American, and how during a year and a half of constant stress they came to know and in some cases

even to like each other.

As West says in his introduction, it is not a political

candor with which he writes about the horrors of war in Binh Nghia, the baby shot by mistake and the berserk Marine who tried to murder the villagers adds credence to his tales of gallantry and sacrifice.

Whatever one thinks of the war, it will take the sternest of ideologues to remain unmoved by West's perceptive and human treatment of the men who fought it in Binh Nghia: Lam, the tough police chief who assassi-

NEW YORK TIMES

23 February 1972 P8

BHUTTO WELCOMES
INDIA'S PROPOSAL

By MALCOLM W. BROWNE

Special to The New York Times

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan, Feb. 22—President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of Pakistan made it known today that he would reply to an Indian offer for talks after President Nixon has finished his trip to China.

But Government sources here said Mr. Bhutto was "certain to make a positive response shortly."

In an interview reported by the Pakistan radio, President Bhutto said he had received an indication from a friendly power that India was prepared to hold talks with Pakistan without any preconditions.

The Indian Government said last Saturday that it was prepared to have direct talks with Pakistan "at any time, at any level and without any precondition." The proposal, contained in a letter to Secretary General Waldheim at the United Nations, was made public in New Delhi.

President Bhutto said this was the first such offer made by India and described it as "a scintillating piece of news" and "the brightest thing in the past two months."

The three-week war between India and Pakistan in December produced enormous issues between the two countries, and there has been no significant movement toward settlement this far.

The most pressing are the repatriation of prisoners, an argument on border lines, the economic status of the secessionist state of Jammu and Kashmir and the safety of non-Bengalis living in Bangladesh. All these matters are interrelated and the order of their settlement itself is a key issue that must be taken up by India and Pakistan.

Mr. Bhutto described India's offer as "a tactical maneuver" linked with President Nixon's trip to China, but he appeared to accept it nevertheless.

Talks between Pakistan and the Bangladesh Government of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, however, appear as remote as ever. Sheikh Mujib has repeatedly

said he would talk directly with Pakistan only when and if the Pakistanis recognized his Government.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

23 February 1972

Military Coup
Foiled in Congo
Radio Reports

BRAZZAVILLE, Congo, Feb. 22 (Reuters)—Brazzaville radio reported today that a military coup against President Marien Ngoussu had been foiled overnight. It said the coup was led by army chief of staff, Maj. Joachim Yhombi Opangault.

The radio did not say how the coup had been thwarted nor did it explain the current situation in Brazzaville, capital of this former French territory in West Africa.

For its part, Pakistan has expressed willingness to talk with Prime Minister Rahman's Government only with no preconditions and only after the removal of Indian occupation forces in Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, gift packages for Indian and Pakistani prisoners of war were exchanged directly across the Indian-Pakistani border today for the first time since the end of the December hostilities.

Under Red Cross auspices, 2,000 packages for Pakistani prisoners and 650 packages for Indian prisoners were exchanged, as well as mail from relatives on both sides. The Pakistan radio reported that it was expected that on Thursday there would be an exchange of 120 Indian and 120 Pakistani prisoners, all sick or wounded.

Genocide Trials Planned

DACCA, Bangladesh, Feb. 22 (Reuters)—The Government of Bangladesh plans to try 100 senior Pakistani military officers and officials on charges of genocide for actions taken during the last nine months of 1971, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said today.

He said the men, including Gen. A. A. K. Niazi, the Pakistani commander in East Pakistan before the state gained independence in December, would be tried as ordinary criminals. The defendants will not be protected by the Geneva Convention because it contains no safeguard against such "gruesome offenses," he declared.

The list of those who includes four other Pakistani major generals in addition to General Niazi.

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nated Vietcong on their own home ground until the same thing happened to him: Dang, the competent district chief whom Saigon distrusted because he had been a Vietminh when I met Dang five years later he was still an unpromoted district chief; the American team leaders, Behe, Sullivan, White and McGowan.

There is a photograph in "The Village" of 17 members of the team in September, 1966, shortly before

by an enemy force that outnumbered them eight to one. Of the 17, eight are now dead and four others were wounded.

One is tempted to ask why, and whether anything lasting was bought with all this blood. But West leaves the question and the answers to others, and his book is the better for it. It's an account of brave men at war in a far country, honestly written, and on that account alone is worth reading.

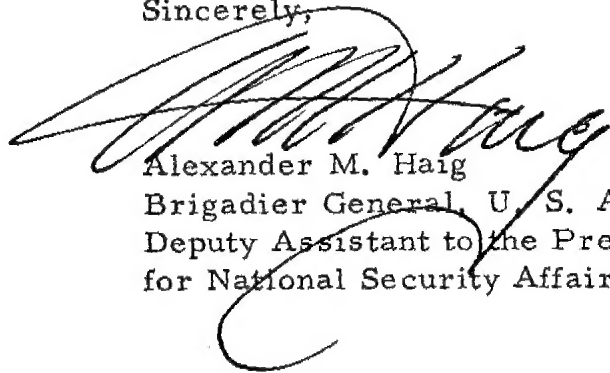
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 26, 1972

Dear Mr. Ridgway:

Dr. Kissinger has asked me to reply to your thoughtful letter of February 8, in which you inform him of the sale of General Electric gas turbines to the People's Republic of China through your manufacturing associate in Scotland. We appreciate your keeping us informed of this transaction, and wish you success in the development of this commercial contact with China.

Sincerely,



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